

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8438
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BUENOS AIRES FOR LEGAL ATTACHE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OGEN PGOV SHUM CI
SUBJECT: LETELIER/MOFFITT CASE: DEVELOPMENTS MARCH 9/10

REF: SANTIAGO 1639

1. GOC ACTIONS: THE PRESS TODAY CARRIES PINOCHET'S
STATEMENT MADE MARCH 9 THAT: "THIS GOVERNMENT HAS
NOTHING TO DO WITH THE LETELIER CRIME". THE PRESIDENT
MADE HIS REMARKS DURING THE SAME PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH
HE ANNOUNCED THE LIFTING OF THE STATE OF SIEGE. HE
REMINDED THE PRESS THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS COOPERATING
FULLY WITH THE INVESTIGATIONS BUT THEN SAID: "I HAVE
THE IMPRESSION THAT THIS IS A WELL MOUNTED CAMPAIGN,
LIKE ALL CAMPAIGNS MOUNTED BY THE COMMUNISTS, TO DIS-
CREDIT THE GOVERNMENT. WHEN THE TRUTH IS KNOWN, IT
WILL BE SEEN THAT IN CHILE THERE IS INNOCENCE". ON
ARMANDO FERNANDEZ, PINOCHET CONFIRMED THAT HE IS AN
ARMY INFANTRY CAPTAIN, BUT SAID HE (PINOCHET) DID NOT
KNOW IF FERNANDEZ AND RMERAL WERE ONE AND THE SAME:
"THE PHOTOGRAPH CONTAINS VERY SMALL DETAILS WHICH IN-
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DICATE THAT THEY ARE NOT." DEFENSE MINISTER BRADY
STATED THAT HE WAS STILL MAKING THE NECESSARY CHECKS
BEFORE REPLYING TO THE DOCUMENT SENT BY THE FIRST
CRIMINAL COURT JUDGE (REFTEL, PARA 3).

2. THE QUESTION OF WHETHER ASSISTANT UNITED STATES
ATTORNEY PROPPER CAN PARTICIPATE IN ANY INTERROGATION

IS ATTRACTING INCREASING PRESS AND EDITORIAL ATTENTION. SPECIAL INVESTIGATING JUDGE LIBEDINSKY WAS QUOTED AS SAYING MARCH 4 THAT "NO FOREIGN INVESTIGATING ATTORNEY CAN WORK AS SUCH IN OUR COUNTRY". HIS VIEW COINCIDES WITH THAT EXPRESSED BY THREE LAWYERS:PROFESSORS THE DAY BEFORE. IN TWO EDITORIALS MARCH 10, "EL MERCURIO" TREATS THE ISSUE OF PROPPER'S PRESENCE AND THE ROLE OF A DISTRICT ATTORNEY IN THE U.S. "MERCURIO" CALLS FOR THE REJECTION "IN THE MOST CATEGORICAL TERMS" OF THE SUGGESTION THAT PROPPER PARTICIPATE AND DESCRIBES THE REQUEST AS "ILLEGAL AND OFFENSIVE". IT NOTES THAT JUDICIAL INQUIRIES IN CHILE DO NOT ALLOW FOR THE PRESENCE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. ARGUES THE DAILY: "IF THIS APPLIES TO CHILEAN OFFICIALS, IT SHOULD DO SO WITH ALL THE MORE REASON FOR FOREIGN INVESTIGATORS, OPERATING UNDER LEGISLATION VASTLY DIFFERENT FROM OURS AND WHOSE INTERVENTION IN OUR PROCEEDINGS WOULD MEAN PLACING A CHILEAN JUDGE UNDER THE CONTROL AND OBSERVATION OF AN AGENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES". IN EDITORIAL TWO, "MERCURIO" DESCRIBES ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY (PROPPER) AS A POLITICAL DESIGNEE WHO, LIKE ALL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS IS YOUNG -- JUST EMBARKING ON HIS CAREER -- AND KNOWS THAT HIS POSITION IS AN EXCELLENT TRAMPOLINE FOR FUTURE ELECTORAL AMBITIONS".

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3. JUDICIAL ACTIONS: LIBEDINSKY TOLD THE PRESS MARCH 9 THAT HE HAD SUMMONED SEVERAL/ FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS TO TESTIFY ON PROCEDURES EMPLOYED IN PASSPORT ISSUANCE. HE ALSO MET FOR HALF AN HOUR WITH FIRST CRIMINAL COURT JUDGE JUANA GONZALEZ, AND TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE HAS EXAMINED THE LETTERS ROGATORY. LIBEDINSKY ALSO REPORTEDLY SENT A REQUEST TO THE CENTRAL IDENTIFICATION OFFICE FOR OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION OF THE EXISTENCE OR NON-EXISTENCE OF WILLIAMS AND ROMERAL. PRESSED ON WHETHER HE WOULD SUMMON TOWNLEY AND FERNANDEZ TO DECLARE, LIBEDINSKY REPLIED: "IT COULD BE, LATER ON".

4. OTHER RELATED LOCAL PRESS PLAY: "TERCERA" IDENTIFIES FERNANDEZ AS A PARTICIPANT IN THE ASSAULT ON THE MONEDA PRESIDENTIAL PALACE DURING THE SEPTEMBER 1973 MILITARY COUP; AN ATTEMPT TO INTERVIEW FERNANDEZ AT HIS HOME BY "TERCERA" REPORTERS MET WITH A CURT EXPLANATION BY A "CUSTODIAN" THAT HE AND FAMILY WERE ON VACATION AT AN UNDISCLOSED PLACE WITH NO KNOWN RETURN DATE. "QUE PASA" OF THIS WEEK REPORTS AS A RUMOR THE FOLLOWING STORY; TOWNLEY AND ANOTHER PERSON NOT YET

IDENTIFIED WENT TO PARAGUAY IN 1976 BUT WERE REFUSED VISAS BY THE US EMBASSY IN ASUNCION. THEY RETURNED TO CHILE. TWO OTHER PERSONS THEN USED THE SAME IDENTITIES TO OBTAIN US VISAS IN SANTIAGO AND TO TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES. A SIMILAR STORY APPEARED IN "ERCILLA" MAGAZINE EARLIER IN THE WEEK.

5. FINALLY, THE SAME "QUE PASA" ISSUE CARRIES REMARKS MADE BY EX-PATRIA Y LIBERTAD LEADER PABLO RODRIQUEZ. HE CLAIMS THAT MICHAEL TOWNLEY, RAFAEL UNDURRAGA, AND MARIANA CALLEJAS HAD A LIMITED ROLE IN THE INCIDENT INVOLVING A CONCEPCION RADIO STATION, WHILE DENYING THAT THEY BELONGED TO PATRIA Y LIBERTAD. ON THE CURRENT LETELIER DEVELOPMENTS, RODRIGUEZ CHARGES: "I LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AM CONVINCED THAT WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING IS A SORDID CIA PLOT AGAINST CHILE. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO LINK THE EFFICIENT CHILEAN SECURITY SERVICES WITH THE CRIME, THEREBY PARTICIPATING IN THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILE AND LAYING THE BLAME ON THE HIGHEST AUTHORITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT WITH THE PURPOSE OF DESTABLIZING THE REGIME." RODRIGUEZ ALSO ASSERTS THAT EMBASSY OFFICERS ARE MEETING WITH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND OTHERS TO BRIEF THEM ON DEVELOPMENTS RELATING TO THE ON-GOING INVESTIGATION.
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